Continues Efforts to Improve Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Education

October 20, 2009

Washington, DC – Today, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07)— a member of the House Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Caucus-- voted for H.Res 558, which designates the week of December 7th, 2009 as National Computer Science Education Week. The resolution, which passed the House by a vote of 405-0, encourages the identification and development of well trained teachers in the vital STEM field of computer science. It also calls for greater opportunities for females and underrepresented minorities in computer science.

"The computer science and technology fields will provide the jobs of tomorrow for young Americans," said Congressman Sestak. "This Resolution encourages increased opportunities for students and educators to learn valuable skills for their futures and create a more competitive workforce for America."

The technology industry is one of the fastest growing industries in the nation. According to the Department of Labor, between 1994 and 2004, 616,000 new jobs were created by the industry and more than 1.6 million jobs are expected to be created by the industry between 2004 and 2014. The Bureau of Labor Statistics has projected science and engineering occupations to grow by 21.4 percent from 2004 to 2014 as compared to a growth of 13 percent for all other occupations during the same period.

"To keep the jobs in these growing fields here in America, we must improve our educational system to produce more talented to science and math students," said Congressman Sestak.

As of 2001, less than ten percent of all bachelor and graduate degrees awarded in our country

related to engineering, math or physical sciences, a 50 percent decline since 1960.

Prior to the Congressman's vote today on this legislation, to support STEM, the Congressman:

1. Voted for the 10,000 Teachers, 10 Million Minds Science And Math Scholarship Act

Would have increased the number of elementary and secondary mathematics and science teachers having both exemplary subject knowledge and pedagogical skills by up to 10,000 per year.

2. Co-Sponsored of the Enhancing Science, Technology, engineering, and Mathematics Education Act.

Stimulates collaboration with respect to, and provide for coordination and coherence of, the Nation's science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education initiatives.

3. Co-Sponsored of the Improving Math and Science Teacher Quality Act.

Amends the Internal Revenue Code to allow certain full-time elementary and secondary school teachers of math, science, engineering, or technology courses a refundable tax credit for 10% of their undergraduate tuition up to $1,000 in any taxable year. Increases such credit amount to $1,500 for teachers in schools serving children with disabilities.